

Child Abduction Prevention

- **Yell, Kick, & Scream** - This may seem obvious, but many children freeze when they are grabbed by strangers. Kidnappers want children to go along quietly. **Yell** - "This person is a stranger!" **Kick** - kidnapper's foot, groin, or knee. **Scream**.
- **Area Code & Phone Number** - Make sure your child knows your area code and phone number. Does your child know how to make a collect call or dial in case of an emergency? Teach your child **not** to give your phone number or address to strangers.
- **Buddy System** - A child alone is an easy target. Encourage your children to use the buddy system and to watch out for each other.
- **Current Photos & Records** - Get photos taken every 6 months of your children and keep a photo on your person at all times. Fingerprints should be taken by a law enforcement, (TPD can assist you. More info [here](#)). Copies of their dental and medical records are a must.
- **Lure Tactics** - "*I have lost my puppy. Will you help me find him?*" "*I'll give you \$10 if you'll help me put this in the car.*" Parents, teach your children how to respond to these people. It is best to ignore them, avoid any conversation, and run.
- **Family Code Word** - Parents, a code word is a lock and key for your child. "*Your Mom and Dad have been in a car wreck. You need come with me right now!*" Child: "*What is the code word?*" If they don't know it then child doesn't go. The child runs away from that person and tells whomever is responsible for them--teacher or parent--what happened. Get a description of the perpetrator if possible.
- **Separation Plan** - Teach your children to go to a cashier or ticket booth if they are separated from you while at a mall, amusement park, or any place you travel.
- **Check Route to School** - The route to school should be established by a parent and under no circumstances should the child deviate from that route. Avoid alleys, etc.
- **Notify School** - Make sure the school will notify you if your child does not arrive at school. Let the principal know who is authorized to pick up your child.
- **Communication** - Keep good communication lines open with your children.
- **Neighbors** - Organize a [Neighborhood Watch](#) group and participate in a safe home program.
- **Child's Clothes** - Make a mental note of what your child wears every day! Do not put your child's name on the outside of the clothing because it allows a stranger to become verbally intimate with your child. Put the name on inside of clothes.

Babysitting Safety

Getting The Job Done

- Babysit only for people you know or who have been referred to you. Don't place advertisements in newsletters or on bulletin boards.
- Leave the name, address, phone number, and expected duration of where you'll be sitting information with your parents.
- Discuss curfew and payment rates, as well as travel arrangements, prior to accepting a job.

On The Job

- Before parents leave, have them write down where they will be, along with the phone number.
- Know all telephone locations, and know how to operate the alarm system if there is one.
- Check on food allergies and medications.
- Don't tie up the phone, as parents may be trying to reach you.
- Don't have friends visit unless parents agree in advance.
- Stay out of closets, desk drawers, and personal papers.
- If the house is suddenly quiet check immediately, as the children may be up to something.

In An Emergency

- In case of a fire, get you and the children out of the house. Go to a neighbor's house and call 911, then the parents.
- Try to stay calm. Children probably won't panic if you don't.

When The Job Is Done

- Inform employer if anything strange occurred (strange phone calls, etc.).
- Always be escorted home. If your employer cannot walk or drive you home, or if he/she seems intoxicated, call home and have someone pick you up.

Daytime Babysitting Tips

- If children are in the backyard, make sure the front door is locked, and vice versa.
- If you take the children for a walk or to the park, etc., make sure you lock all doors and windows. Remember to take keys and a cellular phone, if you have one, with you.
- Never take the children out after dark.
- If you notice anything unusual when you return to the house (broken window, ripped screen, or door ajar) don't go inside. Take the children with you to a neighbor's house or to a public telephone and dial 911.

Fraud Prevention

Stop fraud by reporting it. Only one-third of people who are victims of scam artists report them to police. Report these criminals so they can't take advantage of you or someone else in the future.

If you have doubts about a business, phone the Better Business Bureau.

- Never pay for products or services ahead of time unless you are sure the company is reputable.
- Read everything in a contract before you sign it. Don't sign anything you feel nervous about or do not understand.
- Don't let anyone pressure you to sign anything or to give an answer right away.
- Beware of overly friendly strangers. Scam artists report that the key to selling a scam is to first become friendly with the victim.
- If a sales person won't give you straight answers, stop the conversation.
- Never give out personal information, such as your social security, bank account, or credit card numbers, over the phone unless you initiated the call and know to whom you're talking.
- If someone tells you to place a "900" call to "win" something of value, think first. You pay for 900 area code calls; the cost can be as high as \$10 per minute.
- Be careful of contests, giveaways, sweepstakes, free vacation offers, investment offers, and cures for illness or aging. Many are scams.

Remember: If it sounds too good to be true it probably is.

Vacation Safety

Vacations should be the time that families enjoy one another, get out and experience new things, leave their troubles behind, and make wonderful memories together. Unfortunately, vacations can often be filled with stress and worry, especially when families fall victim to criminals who like to prey on the unsuspecting vacationer. But do not despair; there are things that you can do to lessen your chance of becoming a victim and keeping your vacation memories good ones.

To have a safe and fun vacation whether at home or on the road, consider the following tips:

Before Leaving

- Inform your neighbors how long you expect to be away. Inform them if you will have a housesitter.
- File a **VACATION HOME CHECK REQUEST** with the Sturgis Police Department.
- Have a friend or neighbor pick up mail and/or deliveries. Make arrangements to have the lawn mowed and leaves picked up.
- Simulate a "lived-in" appearance by using timers to run lights and a radio on and off during expected hours.

On the Road

- Never carry large amounts of cash; use traveler's checks. If you must carry a large sum of money, do not display it openly.
- Keep a record of your traveler's check numbers and your credit card numbers in a safe place.
- Have the telephone numbers to call in case your checks or credit cards are lost or stolen.
- Take only credit cards that you actually plan to use. Make a photocopy of all your cards before you leave home so you have a record of the card numbers.
- Be aware of your surroundings and never advertise your plans to strangers. This includes travel routes and the amount of cash you are carrying.

Car Rental and Security

- When renting a car, pick one whose operations you are familiar with. If not, take time to see where the lights, brakes, turn signals, windshield wipers, and spare tire are and how they work.
- Don't rent a car at night. Stay in the hotel and rent it in the morning.
- Always lock your car when entering or leaving it.
- Park in well-lighted, busy areas and check the vehicle's interior and surrounding area before entering.
- Always lock valuables out of sight. Always carry wallets, checkbooks, and purses with you.
- Do not advertise that you are a tourist. Place maps and travel brochures in the glove compartment.
- If you do become lost, drive to a public place to check the map. Don't stop along a street or the highway.

Sightseeing

- Remember the name and address of the hotel/motel where you are staying. Take a business card or a book of matches with the name of the hotel/motel.
- Ask for directions at a hotel/motel to get to those attractions you want to visit.
- Ask if there are any areas of town to avoid.
- Select your guides carefully.
- Stick to well-lighted main streets and public areas.
- Only carry with you the cash you will need, and only in small denominations.

Hotel and Motel Security

- Determine the most direct route to and from your room, to the fire escapes, elevators, and nearest phone.
- When occupying or leaving your room, use all auxiliary locking devices on doors and windows.
- Identify anyone requesting entry to your room. Open the door only if you are certain that the person has a legitimate reason to enter your room. If in doubt, call the hotel/motel office.
- Unpack and place belongings in the closet and dresser. Arrange your things so you'll know if anything is missing.
- When you leave your room, close up your suitcase.
- Suitcases should always be locked so they cannot be used to carry your property out of your room.

- Never leave money, checks, credit cards or car keys in the room. Take them with you.
- Place extra cash, expensive jewelry or other valuables (furs, gems, gold, or silver) in the hotel/motel safe.
- Report any lost or stolen items to the hotel/motel management and to the police.
- Report to the management any suspicious movements in the corridors or rooms.

On the Town

- Never display large amounts of cash when making purchases. It is better to use traveler's checks or credit cards.
- Men should carry wallets in an inside coat or trouser pocket.
- A woman should hold her purse close to her side when walking. Be sure the purse is closed tightly and that the opening is facing the body.
- Don't stop to give money to panhandlers.
- Be aware of your surroundings and those around you. If you feel threatened or uncomfortable, seek help.

Traveling safely with your family also means sticking together and keeping an eye on your children at all times. Make sure they know where you're staying (name and address), and teach them what to do if they get lost or separated. You might want to agree on a meeting place, just in case. And by all means, make sure your kids know not to accept rides or favors from strangers.

Make your family vacation a memorable one for all the right reasons!

Personal Protection

A feeling of helplessness is common when people become the victim of a crime. This can range from being assaulted to having property stolen. These are ways to help you avoid becoming a victim and ideas on how to handle the situation if confronted.

Three elements are needed for a crime to occur:

- **Target** is the object of a person's desire
- **Desire** is the motivating factor a person has for committing a crime
- **Opportunity** is a favorable forming of circumstance in which a crime can be cultivated

Take one or all three of these elements away and the crime will probably not be committed.

When out and about

The most effective weapon is using your head. The best ammunition is quick thinking, common sense, and alertness.

- Be assertive - Stand tall instead of slouching, walk as if you own the street, and make eye contact with people

- Be aware - Stay alert and continually look around you, avoid using headphones, never go home if you think you are being followed, and do not accept rides from strangers
- Be aware of your surroundings - Know what is going on around you, do not walk into unnecessary confrontations, and avoid shortcuts through vacant lots or other deserted areas

To fight back or not

- Not for personal property if the subject is armed
- Use a defensive weapon - Personal alarms or a whistle
- When resisting an attack - Incapacitate by striking a vulnerable spot (eyes, throat, groin), or create a distraction so you can flee

Defensive driving

- Always check the back seat and floor of your car before getting in
- Hit the horn if you feel someone is following you
- After parking your car, gather all items you are taking before getting out
- Park in well-lighted areas
- Always lock your car, whether parked or driving
- Keep the windows up
- Whenever possible, travel with another person

Using public transportation

- Prior to boarding: Use well-lit stops, stand near other people, and follow a schedule that minimizes your waiting time
- After boarding: Sit near the driver, beware of arguments or commotion, and above all beware of strangers

While at home

- Don't answer the door if you feel uncomfortable with a particular situation
- Be cautious of strangers who want to use your phone (offer to call the police to assist them)
- Don't let anyone lure you out of your home
- Don't let babysitters entertain visitors in your home
- Never divulge personal information
- Admit "repairmen" only if you have an appointment with them
- Doors and locks: Always lock your doors and windows, install deadbolt locks on exterior doors, door hinges should be on the inside, make sure exterior doors are solid core, and your bedroom door should have a lock
- Lighting and visibility: Exterior doors should be well lit, create a barrier of light all the way around your home, place lights high enough to prevent tampering, and prune or transplant overgrown bushes and trees
- Apartment dwellers: Be careful in laundry rooms, don't buzz or allow anyone in that you do not expect, know or trust, and don't allow anyone to follow you into a building or hall. Remembering to implement these suggestions will help make you less of a target. By removing that element, you can reduce or eliminate your chances of becoming a victim.